

Policy Development

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Policy is an important component of any program. All members of the school wellness committee should be involved with the development and revision of the policy. When drafting the local wellness policy, start by determining the desired objectives. Once identified, decide what policy guidelines are needed to support and achieve these objectives. A policy should:

- Define activities to be completed;
- Identify who is responsible for implementing the policy;
- Include an evaluation plan that details how the policy will be measured;
- Establish a timeline for when activities should be completed.

Goals and Objectives

An effective policy must include clearly defined goals and objectives. Goals and objectives should be realistic. A goal is something that you are trying to do or achieve. Goals are not measurable; rather they are broad statements that are related to longer term outcomes. An objective is a specific action taken to achieve the goal. Unlike a goal, an objective should be measurable. Sample goals and objectives are included throughout this resource.

When developing your policy, consider how you will evaluate whether objectives and activities are being met. Evaluation is used to measure activities and assess progress towards reaching the goal. More information on evaluating wellness policies can be found in the Evaluation and Public Reporting section.

Policy Language

Policy language should be clear and concise. Objectives should include specific statements that describe a strategy for implementation. Also, including strong language ensures that the policy guideline can be enforced. When writing your policy, use strong words like *require*, *must*, and *insist*. Statements that are vague and include weak language are difficult to enforce. Avoid using words like *may*, *encourage*, *suggest*, and *urge* in your policy. The following table offers examples of strong and weak policy language.

Strong Language Examples	Weak Language Examples
School staff is prohibited from using food as a reward.	Teachers are encouraged to use non-food rewards.
Physical activity must not be used as a form of punishment.	It is suggested that physical activity not be used a form of punishment.
It is required that all vending machines be turned off during the school day.	The school encourages the sale of healthy foods in vending areas.